

Harris Will

Pardon

*Stripling, He
Tells*

*Baby of
Prisoner*

Convicts Petition Governor to Free Dr. McNaughton, Who Saved Leo Frank's Life by Prompt Surgical Treatment

BY LINTON K. STARR.

(Staff Correspondent)

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga., July 24.—Bessie Lucile, six-year-old daughter of Edgar Stripling, has obtained Governor Harris' promise that her father shall be freed.

As the Governor stood in the lobby of the Prison this morning, the little girl dashed up to him and clasped his hand.

“Governor, let my papa out,” she said. “We’ve nobody to work for us and mama’s sick. Won’t you please let him go home.”

“Tell your papa,” said the Governor, “that I’m going to let him out sometime within the next two years, before my term of Office Expires. I can’t say just when, but I’m going to let him out.”

The news was rushed to Stripling, who has been here about two years, following his arrest at Danville, Va., where he had for many years, under an assumed name, held the Office of Chief of Police, following his killing of J. B. Cornett in Harris County some fourteen years ago.

“SOON, OR IT’S NO USE.”

“If he doesn’t free me within the next sixty days, it’ll be no use,” he said. His voice trembled and tears ran down his cheeks. “Look at this,” he held out his hand, which trembled with nervousness.”

“I’m a physical and mental wreck,” he said. “My wife is sick, no work, no money—it’s driving me crazy.”

“For a year I’ve been able to do no work except look after the mail. I’m dying.”

Turning to a fellow Prisoner, he said:

“You’ll have to look after the mail for me this morning. I can’t.”

With Stripling are his grown daughter, Ruth, and the little girl who pleaded for him with the Governor. They are boarding near the Prison, and spend all the time possible with their father. Stripling’s wife is sick at her home in Columbus.

With her is another grown daughter, Miss Annie Lee.

The Plea of Stripling's little girl was made without his knowledge. The Governor was pointed out as the man who could free her father and she dashed toward him.

Stripling was presented to Governor Harris.

"I greet you as a Christian Gentleman which I know you are," said Stripling.

"I believe you are my friend. May God crown your Administration with glory."

With that Stripling broke down and sobbed like a child.

A NERVOUS WRECK.

Stripling is a complete nervous wreck following the excitement of the morning. He is almost delirious and screams when addressed. His daughter is in practically the same condition.

"It can't be true," he said. "I can't believe it; I have suffered so much I can stand it no longer. My daughter has hardly recovered from the effects of taking Carbolic Acid some weeks ago. I'm afraid she will try suicide again. I can't stand it."

The big former Police Chief screamed at the top of his voice. Physicians will permit no one else to see him today.

Stripling's daughter, Miss Ruth, asserted that she is in constant, fear that something will happen to her father.

"My mother is working herself to death," she said, "and I am afraid to leave here to help her. I don't think we can stand it much longer. So many hopes have been held out, only to drift away. I have heard only today that, despite what Governor Harris said, there isn't much chance of getting father's Case up soon. I feel that something will block it."

Miss Stripling, like her father, is in a state of nervous collapse.

STRIPLING'S STRANGE STORY.

Edgar Stripling, in 1897, was sentenced to the Georgia State Prison Farm for the killing of William Cornett, who Stripling accused of insulting his sister. Cornett was shot through the window of his home.

In 1909 Stripling escaped. Later, under the name of R. E. Morris, he settled at Danville, Va., moved his family there and became a respected Citizen. He joined the Police Force and was promoted to the Position of Chief of Police in a short time.

It was while serving as Chief that he was recognized by a traveler to Danville. He was returned to Georgia Prison Farm about two years ago. Governors Hoke Smith, Joseph M. Brown and John M. Slaton had declined to grant Executive Clemency to him.

PETITION FOR M'NAUGHTON.

Dr. W. J. McNaughton, serving a Life Term for murder in Emmanuel County will be freed if the wishes of his fellow-Prisoners at the Georgia State Farm are carried out. Today Governor Harris was presented with a Petition for Clemency for McNaughton, signed by 137 of 150 Prisoners in the Main Building.

"Not a man to whom the Petition was presented refused to sign it," said the Prisoner who circulated the Petition. "The only reason it is not unanimous is the fact that it was not started until late yesterday and we didn't have time to see everybody."

The Petition is inspired by the quick action of Dr. McNaughton in saving the Life of Leo M. Frank when his throat was slashed last Saturday night by William Creen, a Prisoner.

Prisoners and Officials alike state that but for the work of Dr. McNaughton, Frank would have died.”

“For nearly two years,” the Petition of Prisoner says in part, “Dr. McNaughton was ministered to our sufferings. He has answered our calls at any time, day or night, and always cheerfully and willingly. We have learned to love him and feel grateful to him for reason that he has devoted his Life and efforts for nearly two years to relieving suffering.”

“He has our utmost confidence, and we fully believe in him. We have tried him in the Crucible of Prison Life, and he has not been found wanting.”

“We beg of you that you harken to our Petition and Prayer that you grant mercy and Liberty to this Christian man who has done so much to render our lives more endurable while in Prison

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HARRIS WILL

PARDON

STRIPLING, HE

TELLS

BABY OF PRISONER

T. EDGAR STRIPLING

**As he appeared in his Uniform as
Chief of the Danville, Va., Police Force.**

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and who has unfailingly answered our every demand with a smile.

“We beg of you that your Excellency will grant a full and speedy pardon to Dr. McNaughton, whom we believe fully merits it.”

Dr. McNaughton stated: “I am extremely grateful. I have endeavored to do my duty as best I could. This Petition is voluntary on the part of the Prisoners, and it would not be fitting that I say more.”

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TRIED TO KILL FRANK

TO PREVENT ATTACK ON PEN, SAYS CREEN

Frank's Assailant Tells
Gov-

error Harris Whole
Story of

Attack and Reasons
for Try-

ing to Slay Fellow
Prisoner

SAW DEATH OF
OTHERS

IN ATTACK ON
PRISON

Feared Loss of Innocent
Lives

if Frank Was Not Put
Out of

Way—Governor Holds Offi- cials Blameless

BY LINTON E. STARR.

(Journal Staff Correspondent.)

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga., July 24.—William Creen this morning told Governor Nat E. Harris that he tried to kill Leo M. Frank Saturday night, because he believed that in so doing, he would rid the Georgia State Prison of a man whose presence he believed would result in the attack by a mob on the Prison and consequent loss of innocent lives in the battle with guards that he believed would follow.

This Opinion, he said, had been formed in reading newspapers. He asserted that his attack was inspired by no one, and was made simply because he himself felt that it was his duty to kill Frank.

OFFICIALS EXONERATED.

Governor Harris stated, following his talk with Creen, that he did not hold Warden James E. Smith or other Officials responsible.

He asserted that he proposed to see if Prison conditions are up to the Great Standards of the unlimited resources of the State of Georgia, and that he would send a Special Message on the Subject to the Legislature soon after his return to Atlanta.

“I don’t like it,” he said, in referring to conditions.

Creep told his story in the presence only of Governor Harris and Adjutant General J. Van Holt Nash, the Governor asking in accordance with the Prisoner’s wishes that he be granted a private audience.

Creen, unmanacled for the first time since his attack on Frank, was closeted with the Governor in the Room adjoining that in which Frank lies wounded. All doors leading from the Room were bolted.

CREEN’S STORY.

Creen began by reciting to the Governor the History of his own Case up to the time of the attack on Frank. He told briefly of the fact that he had killed two men and was serving a Life Sentence.

“Why did you do this?” asked the Governor, referring to the attack on Frank.

Creen’s story, as repeated by the Governor and General Nash, substantially was:

“I had heard talk of the danger of Frank being kept here.”

“I felt that as long as he was here, there was danger of the Prison being attacked. I was afraid of the Guards and the people making the attack would shoot at each other and people be killed, so I came to the conclusion that it was my duty to save the people from the danger to which Frank’s presence exposed them. I determined that Frank was subjecting us to danger, to so decided that I would kill him.”

“When did you conceive this idea?” asked Governor Harris.

“A few days before it happened,” replied Creen. “I studied over it and decided to carry my plan out.”

“Now tell the Governor the truth, Creen,” said Governor Harris. “Was there any suggestion made to you from the outside?”

CREEN ON KNEES.

Creen fell to his knees and raised his hand.

“I swear, that I never talked of the Frank Case to anyone inside or out of the Prison before or after the attack.”

“Did you mean to kill him,” Creen was asked.

“I did,” he replied calmly. “I felt it was my duty.”

Asked where he obtained his knife, Creen replied that he slipped it from the Kitchen on the Friday night before he attacked Frank and had hidden it in his cot.

After Creen’s talk with the Governor the newspaper correspondents were called in to hear Creen’s Statement in reference to Charges that he had been beaten by Prison Authorities.

In the presence of the Correspondents Governor Harris asked him whether he had ever been whipped here.

“No,” was the answer.

NO FAULT TO FIND.

Creen bared his back which was said to have been scarred from floggings. There was no evidence of his ever having been beaten.

“Have you ever been mistreated here in any way?” Creen was asked.

There was no answer, but the Prison Commissioners and the Governor stated that Creen, a few minutes before, had told them he had no fault to find.

Governor Harris stated to the newspaper men that he had come to Milledgeville not so much to investigate the attack on Frank as to look into Prison and Prison Conditions generally.

“I propose to find out,” he said, “why one inmate of the Prison would attack another and how. With the Facilities here, I don’t see how anyone could have prevented this attack on Frank. Unless the Prisoners were provided with Separate Cells, I am not blaming Prison Officials.”

“As to conditions here,” said the Governor, “I will say merely that I don’t like them. Anything else I have to say will be incorporated in the Special Message, I shall send the Legislature soon after my return to Atlanta.”

The Governor indicated that he would make very drastic recommendations and that he expects his message to result in decided changes. He called attention to the fact that only about one-tenth of Georgia’s convicts are here.

Asked whether he thought Creen cra-

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TRIED TO KILL FRANK

TO PREVENT ATTACK

ON PEN, SAYS CREEN

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zy, the Governor replied that he thought him “weak minded.”

Several convicts were questioned briefly by the Governor and Commissioners, and all expressed the belief that Creen’s action was the result of no influence in or out of the Prison.

Eyewitnesses told precisely the stories published in The Journal of how Creen crept on Frank as he slept and slashed his throat although no one was questioned who personally saw all the occurrences.

To set at rest the Reports that Frank has not been seriously wounded, the Governor and Commissioners saw Frank’s wound

dressed. They did not question Frank, merely watching the Physicians, and leaving the Room as soon as the Surgeons had finished.

“TERRIBLE WOUND,” SAYS HARRIS.

“It was a terrible gash,” said Governor Harris.

“There is no doubt about the Fact that Frank was seriously wounded.”

From the main Prison Building, the Governor and Commissioners went to the Tuberculosis Hospital where they questioned Frank Reid and Charles W. Millen about the fight yesterday in which Millen was stabbed in the abdomen.

The Prisoners stated that they fought over personal matters following their discharge as Hospital Stewards, each accusing the other of being responsible for the loss of his position.

Reid stated that the knife with which he stabbed Millen had been in his possession “for a long time,” secured from Guards.

The investigation will be concluded this afternoon.

Governor Harris and Commissioners E. L. Rainey and T. E. Patterson arrived at 6:15 this morning and immediately joined Chairman R. E. Davidson, who arrived yesterday and spent the night at the farm. Adjutant-General J. Van Holt Nash came as the Governor’s aid.

At the special invitation of the Governor, Representative John T. Dorsey, of Cobb County, Chairman of the House Penitentiary Committee, and Representative C. M. Taylor, of Monroe County, a member of the House Committee, are present. It is expected that several other members of the General Assembly Penitentiary Committee will arrive during the day.

The investigators went into the details of the Attack Saturday night on Leo M. Frank by William Creen and also went in Charges of Joe Johnson, ex-convict, that certain Prisoners were enjoying "rich men's privileges" here. The condition of Leo M. Frank this morning continues good. He rested well last night and is declared to be steadily recovering.

FARM IS INSPECTED.

Soon after arriving, Governor Harris and members of the Commission went over the State Farm and through the main Prison Building.

In the Sleeping Quarters of the Prisoners, Warden James E. Smith pointed out to the Governor the location of Frank's cot and of Creen's bunk across the Room, some sixty feet away.

The Governor stopped and met a number of the Prisoners.

Creen, still chained, lay on his cot at the back end of the Room, and followed the approach of the Committee with his eyes. He was freshly shaved and attired in a Clean Suit. He smiled and seemed to enjoy the Fact that he was the subject of comment.

When the Governor approached, Creen said:

"I'm not going to tell my story to any one except you alone, unless Mr. Hardaway comes. I think you both are my friends. Nothing but lies have been told about me, and I want to tell you my story. I know I have done right."

In response to questions from the Executive, Creen told the Governor that he had kept in pretty close touch with the Frank Case by reading newspapers before Frank was brought here.

In accordance with his wishes, Creen was granted a Private Audience with the Chief Executive. No one was present except

Creen, Governor Harris and Adjutant-General Nash in the Capacity of the Governor's Secretary and Aide.

Following the talk with Creen, the Governor and members of the Prison Commission met behind closed doors in the Office of Warden Smith.

They called in Charles W. Dyer, trusty on night duty as Floor Walker in the Prisoners' Sleeping Quarters, and questioned him about Creen's attack on Frank.

Dyer stated merely that he was off duty at the time of Creen's attack and was asleep on his cot near Creen, and that he knew nothing of the attack until it was over.

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MUSCOGEE'S PRISONERS ATTRACTING ATTENTION

COLUMBUS, Ga., July 22.—Muscogee is becoming noted at the State Farm. Frank Reid, the White Convict who was serving a Life Term for murder, just as was Creen, Frank's Assailant, and who made a similar attack, with a Butcher Knife on the person of another Prisoner at the Farm, was sent up from this County in

November of 1907 on conviction of killing a White Man by the name of John Bellamy on April 24, 1907.

Bellamy and Reid, who were Employees of a Hosiery Mill North of Columbus, had a fight just after work hours, Reid went to his home near by, got a pistol, went to the Boarding House of Bellamy and shot him dead from a second story window.

At the trial, Attorneys T.T. Miller and E.J. Wynn agreed with the Solicitor General to accept a verdict of murder with recommendation to mercy of the Court, and Judge J.H. Martin, then on the Bench, sentenced him to Life.
